VII. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES BASED ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

In the past several years, environmental considerations associated with highway construction have come to the forefront of the planning process. The legislation that dictates the necessary procedures regarding the environmental impacts is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Section 102 of this act requires the execution of an environmental impact statement, or EIS, for road projects that have a significant impact on the environment. Included in an EIS would be the project's impact on wetlands, water quality, wildlife, historic properties and public lands. For projects with less than significant impact, other documents such as CE (Categorical Exclusion) or EA/FONSI (Environmental Assessment/Finding of No significant Impact) may be used. While this report does not cover the environmental concerns in as much detail as a NEPA document would, preliminary research was done on several of these factors and is included below.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

WATER QUALITY

Water quality is a prime asset of all cities and every effort should be made during highway construction as well as during other construction to adhere to recommended guidelines to ensure the prevention of pollution. Guidelines have been issued outlining procedures for maintaining water quality and the reduction of possible soil erosion occurring during and following highway construction. Obviously, the greater the extent of new construction, the more serious will be the problems relating to conservation and water quality.

The Rockingham-Hamlet planning area has three water intake sites, which are used for local water supply, located on Roberdel Lake, Big Lake and Rockingham City Pond. Each of these intake sites include a critical water shed located in the area behind and around the lakes. One proposed facility may have an impact to the critical water shed area of Rockingham City Pond.

Another concern to water quality is waste sites. Waste sites are waste leaking from underground tanks and sewage disposal. There are three different categories of waste sites. A description of the three categories are as follows: 1) Superfund Sites are critical. A major hazardous waste site with leaking underground tanks. 2) Groundwater Incidents are also leaking underground tanks. However, they are not as critical as superfund sites. 3) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) are sewage discharge outfalls from some type of industry. One proposed project crosses a superfund site and another runs with in two miles of a superfund site. These sites will need to be investigated before any construction can occur.